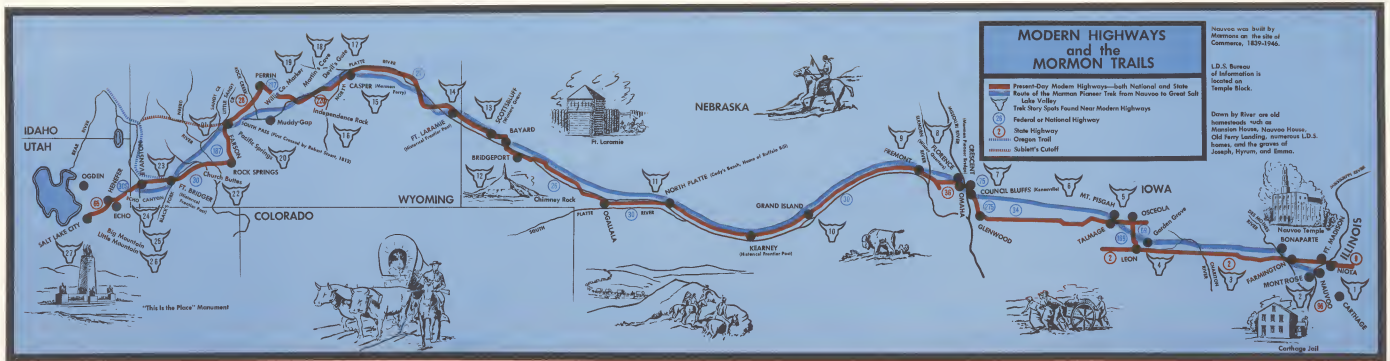

VACATION WITH THE PIONEERS

*By Gustive O. Larson**

On your next auto trip between Nauvoo, Illinois, and Salt Lake City, Utah, take a trek with the Mormon pioneers. Go along their trail, stop at story spots and remember their courage.

Starting in Nauvoo, inquire of the Latter-day Saint bureau of information on Temple Block about what to see and how to get there. Leaving Nauvoo, Illinois, by State Highway 96, drive north to Niota; then cross the toll bridge on the Mississippi River to Ft. Madison.

The pioneers began crossing the Mississippi River on Feb. 4, 1846. The Church Leaders crossed on the 11th, and made their first encampment on Sugar Creek nine miles west. The Sugar Creek camp was broken up on March 1, and the Saints passed northwestward near the present Farmington on Iowa State Highway 2, then along the Des Moines River to Bonaparte. Continuing westward, they paused on the Chariton River from March 22 to April 1 to perfect their organization, and then moved on to Garden Grove to establish an agricultural base.

Leaving Ft. Madison and traveling west on Iowa State Highway 2, one travels for 130 miles to an intersection with Iowa State Highway 204. A side trip five miles northward brings one to Garden Grove.

Returning to State Highway 2, drive west 8 miles to Leon and the intersection with U. S. Highway 69, drive north 21 miles to Osceola and west on U. S. Highway 34 some 18 miles to an intersection with U. S. Highway 169 on the right. Between this junction and Talmage, two miles distant, a sign indicates a turn northward to the site of Mt. Pisgah. Two miles of dirt road brings you to markers where the Mormons established their second agricultural base. Here Captain Allen first contacted the Saints about a Mormon battalion.

Returning to U. S. Highway 34, continue west 92 miles to Glenwood; then go north 18 miles on U. S. Highway 275 to Council Bluffs.

Known as Kanesville, this community remained an important Mormon center until 1852, when the Saints moved west and the town received its present name.

Drive 12 miles north on U. S. Highway 75 to Crescent and turn west across Mormon Pioneer Memorial Bridge (see inscription) to Florence, Nebraska, a northern suburb of Omaha.

Florence was originally Mormon "Winter Quarters," where one thousand log cabins housed the main body of the Saints during the winter of 1846-47. They were organized into 22 wards.

Visit the old Pioneer Park in Florence. Then follow Nebraska State Highway 36 to its junction with Nebraska State Highway 8 and drive northwest on State Highway 8 about 15 miles to Fremont. A marker at Barnard Park in Fremont on the corner of Military and Clarkston streets records that Mormon pioneers passed this place April 17, 1847.

Leaving Fremont on U. S. Highway 30, the Mormon pioneers now followed the Oregon-California Trail up the Platte River (keeping apart from the main traffic by taking the north side as far as Ft. Laramie). Follow U. S. Highway 30 west (past Kearney) for approximately 300 miles to Ogallala. The river has now divided into the North and South Platte. Take U. S. Highway 26 along North Platte for 318 miles to Casper.

Along the route watch for *Court House Rock* and *Chimney Rock* near the towns of Bridgeport and Bayard, respectively. *Rebecca Winters' grave* can be seen by driving east from Scottsbluff on U. S. Highway 26 and south by the Great Western Sugar Factory to the railroad tracks. *Fort Laramie*, originally a fur trading post, later became a major government station on the Oregon Trail for protection of westward migration.

Casper, Wyoming, became an early ferrying station as the Mormon Pioneers not only effected their own crossing of the Platte River, but remained a decade to assist the general migration. The government built a fort in 1858 as a protection to the old Platte Bridge.

The Mormon, Oregon, and California trails now turned up the Sweetwater River, through South Pass, and down to the Sandy. Follow Wyoming State Highway 220 southwest 73 miles to Muddy Gap, then U. S. Highway 287 northwest 75 miles to Perrin, and Wyoming State Highway 28 southwest 68 miles to Farson.

Watch for *Independence Rock*, "Register of the Desert," about 50 miles from Casper on the river side of the road; then *Devil's Gate* on the right-hand side; and, farther along on the same side, look for the marker pointing out *Martin's Cove* of Mormon handcart fame. Between Perrin and Farson on Rock Creek, a Willie Company marker is located several miles to the left. At Farson on Sandy Creek, a marker recalls the meeting of Brigham Young and James Bridger.

The pioneer route followed the Sandy River to the Green River and then took a short cut to Black's Fork and Ft. Bridger. Today this famous landmark is reached by driving 42 miles southward on U. S. Highway 187 to Rock Springs and then approximately seventy miles west on U. S. Highway 30. Remnants of the old fort stand as mute reminders of trapper, Oregon Trail, and Mormon pioneer days.

The Saints left the Oregon Trail west of Ft. Bridger to follow Hasting's "Cutoff" and the Reed-Donner Trail of 1846 into Salt Lake Valley.

The Mormon Trail lies south of present U. S. Highway 30 until the two join near the head of Echo Canyon. Following U. S. Highway 30 across Bear River and through the canyon to Echo City, turn right to Henefer. Here turn left onto Utah State Highway 65, which approximates the pioneer route through East Canyon and over Big and Little Mountains, finally emerging through Emigration Canyon into Salt Lake Valley. There are pioneer markers on both mountains and the "This is the Place" Monument stands at the mouth of Emigration Canyon.

*Assistant professor of Church history and philosophy.

STORY SPOTS FROM NAUVOO TO SALT LAKE CITY

You will want to stop at these story spots near our modern highways and remember the Mormon Pioneers who trudged into history along this trail:

1. Nauvoo, Illinois — This city was established in 1839 by the Latter-day Saints. Within a few years, it became the largest municipality of the state. In 1846, most of the Mormons left to seek a new home and freedom in the West. It was the site of the second temple erected by the Saints.

2. Montrose, Iowa — With the founding of Nauvoo, a number of Mormons settled across the Mississippi River at Montrose in deserted military barracks.

3. Chariton River, Iowa — Mormons paused near the river from March 22 to April 1, 1846, to perfect organization.

4. Garden Grove, Iowa — Here an agricultural base was established, and it became an important stopping place for emigrants crossing Iowa.

5. Mt. Pisgah, Iowa — Another agricultural base was developed here as well as a temporary settlement.

6. Council Bluffs (Kanesville), Iowa — This temporary Mormon settlement continued to 1852. Mormon Battalion was recruited here. Late in December, 1847, after the return of Brigham Young from Salt Lake Valley, a special conference of the Church was called; and he was sustained as President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

7. Crescent City (Mormon Pioneer Memorial Bridge), Iowa — This new bridge, on the Mormon Trail, is on the site where a ferry was operated across the Missouri River.

8. Florence (Winter Quarters), Nebraska — In the fall of 1846, a thousand homes were built of sod and logs. At the Mormon cemetery, 600 were laid to rest during the first year of the exodus. Many thousands of Saints stopped here on their way westward. April 5, 1847, Heber C. Kimball took six of his teams, headed west, and camped four miles beyond Winter Quarters. The trek to the West was beginning again.

9. Fremont (Elkhorn River), Nebraska — On April 16, 1847, the first company of 143 men, 3 women, 2 children and 73 wagons was organized under the command of President Young. The following day, the company departed from the banks of the Elkhorn, going west over the present location of Fremont.

10. Grand Island, Nebraska — Approaching Grand Island, pioneers found large, wild onions and engaged in their first buffalo hunt. Ten beasts were killed and the meat equally distributed.

11. North Platte, Nebraska — Here the pioneers found a Sioux hunting ground. Because of threatening natives, the caravan traveled four abreast with the cannon in the rear.

12. Chimney Rock, Nebraska — Company came within three miles of this landmark. Orson Pratt calculated it to be 260 feet higher than the surrounding plain.

13. Scottsbluff, Nebraska — Pioneers had fun comparing its shape to that of a fortress, castle, etc. Rebecca Winters was buried here. Railroad changed its course to avoid grave.

14. Ft. Laramie, Wyoming — A trading post for buffalo hides flourished here. Seventeen Saints from Pueblo (later Colorado) joined first company at the fort.

15. Casper (Mormon Ferry), Wyoming — Wagons were ferried across on large rafts, which Brigham Young himself helped build. Missourians also were ferried over by Mormons for $1.50 a load. Ten men were left at the ferry to assist oncoming groups.

16. Independence Rock, Wyoming — Called the "Register of the Desert" where hunters, travelers, traders and scouts recorded their initials and dates.

17. Devil's Gate, Wyoming — Sweetwater River rushes through the gap, but passage was too narrow for the pioneer wagons.

18. Martin's Hollow (Rock Creek), Wyoming — Here early snows caught a late-traveling company of handcarts under command of Edward Martin. Out of 575 persons, 135 died before relief wagons could transport them to Great Salt Lake Valley. Wagons reached stranded pioneers, October 31, 1856.

19. Willie Company Marker, Wyoming — Five hundred handcarts under the command of James G. Willie were rescued on October 21, 1856, by relief wagons from Zion. Sixty-six of the company had died.

20. Pacific Springs, Wyoming — On continental divide, pioneers met with Major Moses Harris, mountaineer who brought word of San Francisco Saints.

21. Parson (Little Sandy Crossing), Wyoming — Pioneers found the Little Sandy River easy to cross. After traveling about a mile, they met picturesque Jim Bridger, with two of his men from Ft. Bridger. The frontiersman gave information about the Great Salt Lake Valley.

22. Church Buttes, Wyoming — Here, Willard Richards and Thomas Bullock planted three patches of yellow and white corn for oncoming companies to harvest.

23. Ft. Bridger, Wyoming — Pioneers rested here a day, performed necessary blacksmithing, and traded shirts and rifles for leather goods.

24. Echo Canyon, Utah — Because President Young was ill with mountain fever, he remained behind with the main body near Cache Cave. Orson Pratt departed with an advance party.

25. Big Mountain, Utah — On Monday, July 19, Orson Pratt and John Brown of the advance party climbed to the mountain's summit and became the first Mormons to behold Great Salt Lake Valley.

26. Little Mountain, Utah — The descent was so steep into Emigration Canyon that the rear wheels of wagons were chained and often a dragging log was added to help slow the wagons' forward motion.

27. Great Salt Lake Valley, Utah — On July 21, 1847, Orson Pratt and Erastus Snow entered the valley as the first members of the original company. The next day the advance party creaked in. Brigham Young entered the valley on July 24 with the main body of the pioneers.

—*B. O. H.*

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